



**NEW ENGLAND
COMMON ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

**Released Items
2008**

**Grade 4
Reading**

Reading

❶ Which word rhymes with shine?

- ☐ A. chin
- ☐ B. sight
- ☐ C. clean
- ☐ D. sign

❷ Which word has the same **beginning sound** as jewel?

- ☐ A. girl
- ☐ B. wheel
- ☐ C. gentle
- ☐ D. puzzle

Read this passage about people who traveled to Oregon in the 1840s. Then answer the questions that follow.

If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon

by Ellen Levine

Why did some people want to travel all the way to Oregon?

Back in the 1840s you heard about faraway places by reading newspapers or hearing stories told by visitors who came from the distant places. This is how people learned of a land on the other side—the west side—of the Rocky Mountains. That land was called Oregon.

Stories told about Oregon made it sound like a magical place. Flowers bloomed all year. The land was good for farming. And there was plenty of land that you could get for free. There were tall trees and big forests, and rivers and streams filled with fish.

So the very name *Oregon* made people think of starting new adventures.

What was a wagon train?

A wagon train was a group of covered wagons that went together on the long trip West. The wagons would travel in a single line so that from a distance they looked like a slow-moving train. If the trail was wide enough, they would sometimes spread out to get away from each other's dust.

At night the wagons would form a big circle with the front of one wagon facing the back of another. Children would often play inside the wagon circle after dinner and just before bedtime.

Did anybody lead the wagon train?

Yes. When pioneers gathered their wagons together at the start of the trip, they elected a leader. This leader, or captain, would blow the horn or whistle to wake everybody up in the morning. He was also the one who decided when you would stop for lunch and at the end of the day.

The captain, with a few others, would often ride a little in front of the wagon train to see what was ahead on the trail. Then they would ride up and down the wagon line to make sure that everything was okay.

Usually there was a council of about six to ten people who would meet at night with the captain to talk about how the trip was going. Each person would report on different problems:

- A wagon wheel had broken and the family needed someone to help make a new one.
- Somebody's flour barrel had gotten all wet and muddy crossing the river, and the family needed to get some flour from anyone who could spare a little.
- A group of men had to be organized for the next day's buffalo hunt.

The captain and the council would plan who would stand guard at night to protect the animals and warn the people if anything was wrong.

What kinds of people traveled West?

Many different kinds of people went to live in the new place called Oregon.

Farmers wanted to go to find good new land. Storekeepers wanted to go to set up new shops. There were carpenters and bakers and blacksmiths. There were missionaries and shoemakers and artists and lawyers. There were doctors and teachers and almost anyone else you can think of who might want to try something new.

You were especially lucky if people who knew many of these different things were in your wagon train. Then it was like carrying your whole town with you on the trip.

Sometimes people who didn't start out with you on the trip were there when you arrived at your new home. That's because babies were born on the trip!

If you had a new sister or brother on the trip, the wagon train would stop for a day or two. Usually several of the women knew how to help when babies were born. And there in the middle of a new country would be a new person.

15 The travelers, including the new babies, were called pioneers because they were the first group of people to move into a new land and make a new home.

- 3 Why did wagons in a wagon train sometimes spread out?
- ☐ A. to look like a slow-moving train
 - ☐ B. to avoid the dust from other wagons
 - ☐ C. to move more quickly in a single line
 - ☐ D. to make new trails that were wide

- 4 Why was the captain of a wagon train important?
- ☐ A. The captain knew how to get to Oregon.
 - ☐ B. The captain hunted the buffalo.
 - ☐ C. The captain kept the wagon train organized.
 - ☐ D. The captain gathered the wagons together.

- 5 What was the **main** job of each person on the council?
- ☐ A. to stand guard every night
 - ☐ B. to ride ahead of the wagon train
 - ☐ C. to fix broken wagon wheels
 - ☐ D. to report on different problems

- 6 What is the **main idea** of the part titled “What kinds of people traveled West?”
- ☐ A. Babies were often born during the trip West.
 - ☐ B. People who moved West were called pioneers.
 - ☐ C. Many different kinds of people moved West.
 - ☐ D. Moving West was like carrying a whole town.

7 Use the definitions below.

trail (noun): 1. a marked or beaten path
(verb): 2. to follow behind

Write your own sentences using the word trail to show **each** dictionary meaning.

1. _____

2. _____

Use the definitions below.

report (noun): 1. a news story
(verb): 2. to tell what happened

Write your own sentences using the word report to show **each** dictionary meaning.

3. _____

4. _____

- 8 What is the **main** purpose of the dark headings in the passage?
- ☐ A. to ask the reader questions about the West
 - ☐ B. to organize the information in the passage
 - ☐ C. to show questions that the author still has
 - ☐ D. to give information that is not in the passage
- 9 In the last paragraph, the word pioneers means people who
- ☐ A. are the first to do something.
 - ☐ B. live an exciting life.
 - ☐ C. know many different people.
 - ☐ D. are elected to be leaders.

- 10 Which word means the **opposite** of distant?
- ☐ A. near
 - ☐ B. rough
 - ☐ C. new
 - ☐ D. plenty
- 11 Which of the following is **not** a compound word?
- ☐ A. bedtime
 - ☐ B. storekeepers
 - ☐ C. adventures
 - ☐ D. faraway

- 12** Explain why people in wagon trains traveled in groups instead of alone. Use details from the passage.

[illegible]

Acknowledgments

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Grade 4 Reading Released Item Information

Released Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Content Strand ¹	WV	WV	II	IA	II	II	WV	II	WV	WV	WV	IA
GLE Code	3-1	3-1	3-7	3-8	3-7	3-7	3-2	3-7	3-3	3-3	3-1	3-8
Depth of Knowledge Code	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	3
Item Type ²	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR	MC	MC	MC	MC	CR
Answer Key	D	C	B	C	D	C		B	A	A	C	
Total Possible Points	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	4

¹Content Strand: WV = Word ID/Vocabulary, LI = Literary/Initial Understanding, LA = Literary/Analysis & Interpretation,
 II = Informational/Initial Understanding, IA = Informational/Analysis & Interpretation

²Item Type: MC = Multiple Choice, CR = Constructed Response